



# Healthy Aging in Neighborhoods of Diversity across the Life Span (HANDLS)

## Participant Guide



## Healthy Aging in Neighborhoods of Diversity across the Life Span (HANDLS)

The purpose of the HANDLS study is to:

- Discover if we can determine the causes of good health in Baltimore's neighborhoods
- Better understand some of the diseases related to aging
- Study why some people are healthier than others as they get older
- Study how health changes by looking at the same people over many years
- Look at the effects of income on health

The study takes place in two **M**edical **R**esearch **V**ehicles (MRV) that we bring to your neighborhood. The larger vehicle is a 47-foot customized semi-trailer that has three working areas: an examination room with blood drawing station; a muscle strength testing area; and a bone density and vascular studies testing area. The smaller research vehicle is a 36-foot customized truck with three working areas: an intake room and two interview rooms. The vehicles are designed to be comfortable year round, are handicapped accessible and provide privacy for physical exams and interviews.



### Informed Consent

Before we perform research tests or examinations we must have your written informed consent saying that you want to participate. We want to make sure that you understand the tests in this study and any risks that are involved. We welcome any questions that you might have about what to expect in this study. You may participate in any of the tests, but you need not participate in all of the tests. You may stop any time after a test starts. You may ask questions any time during a test.

## The Home Visit

Since HANDLS is a study of health in Baltimore's neighborhoods, we need to make it truly represent the people of Baltimore. We do this by scientifically pre-selecting individual homes in your neighborhood. If your home is selected, our recruitment and survey staff will visit you to talk about the study and invite you to join. If you agree to participate, you will be asked to respond to a questionnaire that asks about your health, history and life experiences. At the end of the home visit, you will receive an appointment to come to the mobile **Medical Research Vehicles (MRVs)**. During your visit to the MRVs you will receive a thorough medical evaluation, as well as other testing. Every three years, we will revisit you at home to evaluate changes in your health and lifestyle, and you will be asked to return to the MRVs to have the tests repeated. You will be paid for your participation in the home visit and each time you come to the vehicles for the medical evaluation.



## Medical History & Physical Examination

The history and physical exam are an important part of the health evaluation to look for signs of disease. Understanding your lifestyle habits and previous or current medical conditions will provide information about your health and also your risk for some diseases in the future. The history forms will ask questions about any medication you are taking and medical conditions that can be traced in your family. You will also be seen by a health care professional who will go



over your medical history in detail and then examine you. During the physical exam, we will check your blood pressure, heart, lungs, abdomen and skin for abnormal findings. We will also measure your strength and balance during this exam. The medical history and physical exam will take about one hour.

## Blood Test

As a part of the medical evaluation, blood tests are performed to look for anemia and other blood disorders, diabetes mellitus, thyroid disease, hepatitis, prostate disease, and kidney function. We are also using some blood samples to study genes that may play a role in age-related diseases like Alzheimer's disease, heart failure, high blood pressure, and cancer. There are some risks from having blood drawn. There is a risk of an infection from the needle puncture. There is also a risk of a black and blue mark, and you may feel faint. These risks are very small.



## Pulse Wave Velocity

This procedure is designed to measure the stiffness of your blood vessels. We do this by measuring how long it takes for blood to travel from your carotid artery (in your neck) to your femoral artery (the main artery in your thigh). It requires that you lie down on the exam table and have a small button like sensor placed on your neck and your thigh. You will be able to hear the flow of blood during the test. This test takes about twenty minutes to complete. It is painless and there are no risks associated with this procedure.





## Carotid Ultrasoun

This test provides information about blood vessel conditions that may relate to heart disease and stroke. First, we will ask you to lie down and rest for ten minutes. Then, we will take your blood pressure. We will then place an ultrasound sensor on the surface of your neck to take pictures of the main blood vessel in your neck. We will measure the size and the wall thickness of this artery. There are no risks from this test.



## Bone and Body Scan

You will be asked to lie down on a device called a DEXA scanner. This scanner uses small amounts of x-ray radiation to make measurements of your body. It will provide us with information on the quality of the bones in your lower back and hips. Bone quality tells us about the risk of bone fractures, particularly as you grow older. This scan also allows us to measure the amount of fat and muscle. The risks from this test are minimal, including the radiation risks, which are no greater than what you are exposed to by sunlight.



## **Resting Electrocardiogram (EKG)**

We will place wires called electrodes on your skin to record heartbeats. We will look at your heart rate and rhythm and electrical pulses of your heart. It can tell us if you have an enlarged heart, if you have ever had a heart attack or heart condition. There are no risks associated with this test.



The Carotid Ultrasound, Bone and Body Scan and EKG tests will be completed in the bone density and vascular studies testing area and will take approximately 50-55 minutes to complete.

## **Emotions and Heart Rate**

This study examines how recognizing emotions and standing up affects heart rate and blood pressure. We ask participants to tell us what emotions they see in pictures of faces while we record heart rate and blood pressure. This test takes about one hour to complete. There are no risks associated with this test.



## Memory Testing

We will find out how your thinking, memory, and mood change, as you get older. We will ask you to remember words, numbers, and pictures. We will ask you to pronounce words or to think of words from certain categories. We will also ask



you to pick out the same object twice and imagine how objects look in different positions. These tests will take about one hour. There are no risks associated with this test.

After your visit to the **Medical Research Vehicles** we will send you a report that includes results from your physical examination, blood and urine tests, EKG and the bone and body scan. You are encouraged to share these results with your health care provider, especially if abnormal findings are revealed. If you do not have a health care provider, and you would like one, we will assist you with locating follow-up care.





HANDLS STAFF

Look for our medical vehicles in your neighborhood.  
Recruiters will be contacting households in your  
neighborhood soon.

**For further information call:**  
**1-866-207-8363**